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Final Cuban Freedom Pledged by Kennedy

President Reviews Miami Parade; Hails Courage of Fighter Brigade

By GARNETT D. HORNER

Star Staff Writer

MIAMI, Dec. 29.—The gold and blue flag of the Cuban freedom fighters' Brigade 2506 is in President Kennedy's hands today—the symbol of Cuba's eventual liberation from Fidel Castro's police state rule.

A mighty roar of militant approval went up from some 40,000 throats in Miami's Orange Bowl Stadium as the President promised the flag will be returned to the prison-lean survivors of the Bay of Pigs invasion. "In a free Havana"

The President interrupted his winter vacation at Palm Beach, Fla., for a helicopter trip to Miami to "bring my Nation's respect for your courage and your cause" to the 1,113 Cubans released from Castro prisons just before Christmas.

During the nearly 90 minutes he and Mrs. Kennedy spent in the Orange Bowl, the voice of the crowd hardly ever was hushed. It was largely a Spanish-speaking voice, a blend from the just-released prisoners and their relatives and friends in the stands. It roared words like "Libertad"—Liberty—and "Guerra"—War.

President Heartened

The enthusiastic response to his appearance and to his numerous references to an eventually free Cuba obviously heartened the President, whose conscience long has been troubled by the burden of responsibility he bore for the disaster that befell Brigade 2506 in the April, 1961, Bay of Pigs invasion.

Mrs. Kennedy gave the Cuban freedom fighters and their fellow-exiles an emotional wallop by speaking to them in fluent Spanish of her admiration for the bravery of the men who fought for three days against overwhelming odds on the beaches at the Bay of Pigs and then survived 20 months as Castro captives.

"It is my wish and my hope," said Mrs. Kennedy, that her 2-year-old son, John, Jr., some day "may be as brave as the members of Brigade 2506."

The re-formed brigade, uniformed in khaki trousers and

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short-sleeved khaki shorts showing few signs of the prison squalor left behind a few days ago, stood proudly for an easy going inspection by the President.

Lean and Hard

There were not fat men for the President to see in the brigade ranks. They appeared to be well-fed, but lean and hard. Mr. Kennedy, who had thought the freedom fighters all were young men, was much impressed to find men in their 50s and 60s in the ranks.

The highlight of the emotion-packed ceremony came when the President and the brigade officers joined Mrs. Kennedy Cuban Revolutionary Council President Jose Miro Cardona and other leaders of the stout-hearted exiles on a raised stand near midfield—facing the brigade and most of the crowd.

Erneido Oliva, second in command of the brigade, presented to the President the brigade flag which had flown over the Bay of Pigs command post for three days and was slipped away from capture by a Senor Miranda.

Manuel Artime, civil head of the brigade, had explained earlier that the President "is going to keep it (the flag) for us." With conviction he declared:

"Some day it is going to wave over a free Cuba."

Mr. Kennedy, deeply touched, expressed "great appreciation to the brigade for making the United States the custodian of this flag."

Hundreds of small Cuban and American flags waved in the stands and cheers rang out as it meant to be heard in Cuba when the President added:

"I can assure you that this flag will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana."

He then called for Mr. Miranda, who had hugged the flag to his chest and slipped through Castro lines to asylum in an embassy in Havana, to come forward, "so we can meet him."

After shaking hands with the author of the brigade flag, Mr. Kennedy explained: "I wanted to know who I should give it back to."

He spoke only in generalities about the eventual liberation of Cuba.

But he declared: "It is the strongest wish of the people of this country, as well as the people of this hemisphere, that Cuba shall one day be free again."

"And when it is," he added, "this brigade will deserve to march at the head of the free column."

The President spared no words in denunciation of the Castro regime. He said Mr. Castro had made Cuba a "police state," controlled by "a foreign monarch" as much as it was in the last century before it was liberated from Spanish rule in the Spanish-American War. He spoke of the men he faced being freed from "Castro dungeons."

Lesson in Futility

"Your conduct and your valor," he told the men of Brigade 2506, "are proof that although Castro and his fellow dictators may rule nations, they do not rule people; that they may imprison bodies, but they do not imprison spirits."

The President declared his faith that the majority of Cuban people today still hold principle of freedom in their hearts.

"I am confident," he said, "that all over the island of Cuba, in the government itself, in the army, and in the militia, there are many who hold to this freedom faith... who are determined to restore freedom so that the Cuban people may once more govern themselves."

He urged the exiles from the Castro Communist dictatorship to submerge any "momentary differences" and work together "to the united end that Cuba is free, and then make a free choice as to what kind of a government and what kind of a country you freely wish to build."

Mrs. Kennedy, wearing a sleeveless pink dress and white gloves, stood barchanded and listened as her husband inspected the brigade of freedom fighters.

She listened to her husband's speech twice—in English, and then in Spanish as it was translated by Donald Barnes, State Department interpreter, for the mostly Spanish-speaking crowd.

When her turn came, there was no need for a translator (except for non-Spanish speaking American newsmen) as her words rolled out fluent Spanish.

"It is an honor," Mrs. Kennedy said, "for me to be today with a group of the bravest men in the world, and to share in the joy that is felt by their families who for so long lived hoping, praying, and waiting."

"I feel proud that my son has known the officers. He is still too young to realize what has happened here, but I will make it my business to tell him the story of your courage as he grows up."

"It is my wish and my hope that some day he may be as brave as at least half as brave as the members of Brigade 2506."

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